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ABSTRACT

Between now and the end of this century, the People's Republic of China will attempt to become an international economic superpower by attempting to quadruple industrial and agricultural production. The Chinese educational system is the primary institutional partner with the government in this venture. After a decade of confusion and decline in educational standards during the Cultural Revolution, structural reforms have brought about dramatically increased enrollments at all educational levels. Junior middle school education will be made universal in cities and suburbs by 1987 and in rural areas by 1990. In many areas, local governments have taken the lead in strengthening the leadership and management of rural primary and middle schools. In 1985, wages for teachers will be higher than for individuals with similar education in other fields. China has begun to use resources from outside the country to improve educational management. Much of this assistance has come from the United States and other western nations. A proposed Sino-American Center will coordinate teacher exchange programs, assessment of current practices, curriculum development efforts, and development of a laboratory school for teacher training. (CFR)

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CHINA'S OPEN DOOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY: 1985

by

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Between the 1980's and the end of this century, The People's Republic of China government will be attempting to become an international economic superpower by attempting to quadruple industrial and agricultural production for its one billion plus population. Their education system, which was basically in abeyance between 1966 and 1978, is the primary institutional partner to complete this seemingly overwhelming economic achievement. This China paper will establish the rationale for the expansion of education in China and the corresponding need to westernize the system!

The People's Republic of China (China) is growing rapidly, economically. Nineteen eighty-four was a record-breaking year for China. It opened fourteen major coastal cities and Hainan Island to foreign investment. The Chinese Olympians brought home fifteen gold medals. In October the Decision on the Reform of the Economic Structure was adopted as was the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong. The gross industrial and agricultural output value exceeded 1,000 billion yuan ($500 billion U.S.). The social order was stable; the total market was brisk; and the standard of living continued to improve. China developed an independent foreign policy and expanded their contracts with numerous other countries.

State funds for importation of technology in 1985 are expected to double over the same funds for 1984. Technological imports are definitely welcomed in China because they have helped to push the socialist modernization program forward. Some patent laws have been developed to protect foreign investors in China and others are pending.

China has implemented investment laws to ensure economic growth with foreign capital while remaining under a socialistic system. Laws on enterprises wholly owned by foreign investors are being drawn up and will be published sometime this year. More than fifty enterprises have already been

established by foreign investors in the approved special economic zones. Foreign investors who wish to establish enterprises before the law is published must apply to the administrative committee in the zone or the local government office in charge of foreign investment.

China's cities are growing yearly with commerce, and its rural enterprises are also expanding. In 1984 agricultural output was up by twenty-three percent. This adjusted output, though, has its problems. It has become harder for peasants to sell and store surplus grain. This has prompted the government to begin a "buying-according-to-plan" system that will allow peasants to sell on contract to the state with the remainder to be sold in a rural marketing system. While farm production increases, forestry, animal husbandry, fishing, industry, commerce, transportation and service trades remain underdeveloped. Beginning this year, the rural reform will focus on adjusting the national, regional, and local economic structures according to marketing needs and related economic conditions.

Many managerial changes and reforms are currently taking place in China. The Chinese are learning Western management concepts: 1) managers and directors are attending related educational and training classes; 2) foreign experts are being invited to lecture and demonstrate contemporary management systems; 3) managerial delegations are being sent abroad; and 4) Chinese managers are rotating with foreign managers. Higher level managers are being sent to a Sino-American MBA degree program in the city of Dalian in northeastern China.

Education has not remained isolated from China's transformations. After years of structural reforms, education has also been projected to aid the modernization drive. Some 58,000 students are now pursuing postgraduate studies while 1.68 million more are in college programs and 1.537 million are in

secondary technical schools. These enrollments represent increases over the planned 1985 figures. Such students as the aforementioned gained their entrance into these educational institutions by way of passing standardized academic examinations.

Institutions under the government and Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party have sent 3,250 people to teach in various parts of the country. The move, which is aimed at training more primary and middle school teachers, should prompt the whole nation to give more attention to education.

The Beijing municipal Party committee and government in July, 1985, called a conference to discuss ways of making the capital the best-educated city in China. It is envisaged that junior middle school education will be made universal in the urban cities and these suburbs before 1987, and possibly the senior middle school education by 1990. Efforts will also be devoted to universalizing junior middle school education in rural areas by the end of the present decade.

In many areas, local governments have taken the lead in strengthening the leadership and management of the rural primary and middle schools. They have allocated money for the expansion or renovation of school buildings, and some have set up bonuses to reward model teachers. In celebrating China's first national Teacher's Day on September 10, 1985, various areas promoted activities to demonstrate respect for teachers and arouse more social and political concern for education.

In 1985 wages for teachers will be higher than for individuals with similar education in other fields. The state plans to appropriate one billion yuan ($500 million U.S.) for the wage increase of ten million teachers. State funds will also be used for seniority pay to encourage teachers to stay in teaching. The most serious problem now facing teachers is inadequate housing.

The government hopes to reverse the low social and political status of teachers that developed from the intellectual disrespect during the "cultural revolution" (1966-1976).

University students are setting higher ideals for themselves and their country. A large percentage of university students wish to see the realization of a Communist society; they feel that socialism is superior to capitalism; they hope to influence others lives positively; and desire to hold jobs which not only meet the country's needs but their own needs as well.

On the other end of the student spectrum, there is an urgent need for special classes for the one million retarded children in China. Presently, there are only 100 special education classes in the entire country. Teachers and specialists, and classrooms and teaching aids for special education are in short supply. In Beijing alone, there are at least 4,000 retarded children of school age, yet only 500 attend special classes. Efforts are being made to increase the number of special classes and more than 100 primary schools will inaugurate special vocational education courses for the mentally retarded this year. The Chinese government is looking to the U.S. to help deal with such educational problems!

With all these rapid changes in Chinese society and culture, China may soon be keeping international economic pace with Hong Kong and Taiwan within its own larger system. The people of China have been able to attain most of the goals presented in the 6th Five Year Plan (1981-1985). In fact, some of the goals will be overfulfilled by January 1, 1986. In the first half of the decade, the average annual economic growth rate has been estimated at above ten percent. This figure not only far exceeds the original planned target rate of 4 percent, but has topped the average annual rate of 7.2 percent necessary for achieving the goals set for the country by the year 2000. By the end of the five year

period, it is estimated that the state's annual revenue (both national and local) will have doubled. The huge deficits incurred at the end of the 1970's may be eliminated in 1985; foreign trade may have doubled; and China's balance of payments may show a definite surplus.

The 7th Five Year Plan will lay a solid foundation for vigorous economic development in the 1990's and as such will accumulate reserve strength. The key to achieving this lies in making the urban city reforms and the reform of China's scientific research and educational systems a success. As Premier Zhao Ziyang said, this Plan which starts in January, 1986, in a sense is a plan for reform.

In view of China's rapid modernization in economics and education, it has a need to draw from resources outside China. For the past three Winter breaks from his University in December/January, this author has been lecturing to national audiences of Chinese administrators and educators regarding organizational and administrational theory and practice; educational psychology; federal, state and local governance of education; teacher effectiveness; leadership behavior; and the role of the school principal.

An evaluation was taken in January, 1985 and was completed by 122 participants who completed approximately 44 hours of professional education lectures. The participants reviewed the lecture series just completed, stating that the foremost international resource needs of educational administrators and related educators are future retraining programs for middle school principals and teachers.

Pedagogy was ranked number one as to preference for future lecture topics, and it was suggested that such lectures include question and answer, slides, overhead projection, group process, and discussion of lecture notes with daily summaries. They were opposed to the present Russian system of verbatim lecture

notes. Other areas seen as being necessary subjects for future lectures included:

1. Study of international systems of education.
2. Study of student behavior, including human development, learning and measurement.
3. Individualized instructional programs for students in all grades.
4. The changing roles and responsibilities of teachers.
5. The role of the principal as the school administrative leader, manager and overall administrator.
6. Interpersonal relationships between the school administrator and faculty, students and parents.
7. School organizational theory, planning, and practices in the 1980's.
8. Educational services including: media, speech and hearing diagnostic and prescriptive testing, counseling, special education, and talented and gifted education programs.

The four major education problems in the People's Republic of China educational system were seen as:

1. Training quality teachers.
2. Understanding educational monies, budget and finance.
3. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of decentralized national and provincial (state) educational systems.
4. Studying contemporary applied teaching methods, teaching styles and use of resources in the classroom.

The participants also reviewed the primary subjects needed in future retraining programs for middle school principals in China. The top three ranked subjects were:

1. The role of the principal as manager.

2. Organizational theory applied to education.

3. Changing teacher roles and responsibilities.

Approximately 300 middle school principals from the Guangxi Autonomous Region Province were selected in three different groups by the Guangxi Education Bureau to participate in this initial 1984-1985 experimental principals' re-training program. This program was sponsored by the Guangxi Bureau of Education with the purpose of bringing together, if possible, Sino-American higher educational specialist(s) to conduct initial experimental educational programs. The University of Northern Iowa faculty participated in two of the three retraining programs. This stated project may be the first program that may soon be organized into a Sino-American Educational Center for southern China at Nanning or Guilin, Guangxi Autonomous Region. The retraining program was designed by this author in conjunction with Wei Shanmei, President of the Guangxi Bureau of Education and was considered as a workable educational modernization concept by the Chinese officials in conjunction with President Constantine Curris of the University of Northern Iowa during his September/October 1985 trip to China. President Curris is recently quoted as follows:

> "UNI is negotiating with Chinese officials to establish a major retraining program of middle-school principals and teachers in Guangxi province, China. Other provinces may be a part of the project if it is completed.
>
> Guangxi province has a population of 38 million people and the retraining of all principals and teachers there is beyond the scope of UNI acting alone. UNI would enter into contracts with other universities for assistance to fulfill all the expectations.

The program would entail many steps, including the exchange of Chinese and

UNI faculty. UNI student exchanges with sister universities are being negotiated now with the possibility of a UNI student going to China this spring."

The following four stages will be used to begin the Sino-American Center:

1. The first stage would be a needs assessment of China Middle Schools for the purpose of curriculum development. This would take place throughout the Guangxi Autonomous Region in January 1986.
2. The second stage would consist of organizing, planning and implementation of curriculum from the needs assessment. As suggested by the Chinese, this would attempt to be in the following three designated areas: international education, educational psychology and educational administration.
3. The third stage would involve educating and training approximately 10,000 Guangxi Autonomous Region middle school principals. The total instructional period for the principals would cover six weeks with 1000 or more principals in each group. Tentative teaching teams would include: educational administration, including practicing principal(s); educational psychology, including (a) U.S. Federal project staff member(s); and international education, including a comparative systems expert(s).
4. The fourth stage would be an assessment and evaluation which would take place two or three months after the initial large group instruction has been completed.

Upon completion of the four stage experimental program, a similar program would be initiated having a similar format for the selected middle school teachers. The possible difference would be related to the assessment and evaluation steps.

The first new principals retraining program would be concluded four to five months after the Center inception is inaugurated. The second program would begin after a determined break period. Subsequent programs would be primarily conducted by the Chinese higher education specialists who are members of the Sino-American Center team and would have completed related educational seminars and practicums at the University of Northern Iowa. It has been recommended that this Sino-American Center project begin during the Summer or Fall Semester of 1986. It has been suggested that the retraining programs operate in the cities of Nanning and Guilin; this also might include related educational institutions throughout the Guangxi Autonomous Region. Most of the personnel resources from the U.S. would be from higher educational institutions in the state of Iowa.

There are several westernized professional educational projects that the proposed Sino-American Educational Center must also address. These include the following three major education concerns by the Guangxi Bureau of Education officials:

1. The modernization of the Guangxi educational system for middle schools.
2. The development of graduate degree programs in professional education in advanced Western teacher/administrative fields of study.
3. A laboratory school to be developed as a model training and retraining school for educational modernization purposes. It will be initially staffed with faculty, administrators and related professional people from both Chinese and American institutions. The Price Laboratory School at the University of Northern Iowa will be used as a reflective and adaptable model.

This proposed Center has its roots in the initial Sino-American educational project known as the National Center for Industrial Science and Technology Management Development in Dalian, China. A 1985 survey was undertaken by the

American Embassy in Beijing to assess the impact of the Dalian training and education program on Chinese management. The graduates interviewed felt that the introduction to American modern techniques of management opened up "new vistas of knowledge."

One important result the Dalian Center has facilitated is the establishment of informal horizontal links among its graduates. The lack of horizontal ties among its industrial and bureaucratic structures is presently one of China's worst management problems.

A visible sign of success and acceptance of modern management techniques from the West in China are the number of proposals from other foreign countries to establish similar management training schools in China. The proposal for the Sino-American Education Center has some similarities to this established Dalian management training school concept.

China's present open door educational policy seems to be the result of a closed door policy which kept the educational system "locked up" in a Maoist turmoil from 1949-1978. Economic development in contemporary China, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, has developed a silent partner in the 1978-1990 universal lower middle school educational system. This system should have modernized schools for all Chinese children by 1990. Presently, there are approximately 250,000,000 students in the education system (1984-1985). Can the open-door policy assist in adding another 30,000,000 students? We in the United States can provide the needed technical assistance toward educational modernization as they proceed into the 20th Century and as such assist in the necessary strides for world peace!